

In the authors' copies.

The Life
of . . .
WILLIAM
SAVORY,

Surgeon,
Of Brightwalton.

With
HISTORICAL
NOTES,

BY

GEORGE C. PEACHEY

(Medical Officer of Health, Wantage R.S. District).

London :

J. J. KELIHER & CO., LIMITED,

99, VICTORIA STREET, S.W., AND 33, KING WILLIAM STREET, E.C.

1903.

THE LIFE
OF
WILLIAM SAVORY
(SURGEON),

OF BRIGHTWALTON,
WITH
HISTORICAL NOTES,

BY
GEORGE C. PEACHEY

(Medical Officer of Health, Wantage R.S. District).



London :

J. J. KELIHER & CO., LIMITED,
99, VICTORIA STREET, S.W., AND 33, KING WILLIAM STREET, E.C.

1903.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/b22413558>



**Extracts from the
Commonplace-Book of William Savory,
Surgeon and Student
of the Borough Hospitals in 1788-9.**

THE small village of Brightwalton has, in its time, played many parts. As early as A.D. 939 the manor was granted by King Athelstan to the Abbey of Abingdon. Just before the Conquest it formed part of the possessions of King Harold, after whose defeat at Hastings it passed to the Conqueror, and was granted by him to the Abbey he founded upon the field of Battle. Remaining in the hands of successive Abbots until the dissolution in 1538, it was then granted by Henry VIII. to one of his courtiers, and thence it passed by marriage through several hands, until early in the last century it came, by purchase, to the family of its present owner.

By what decree of fate this village, nestling upon the southern slopes of the Berkshire Downs, came to be selected as the only one in the neighbourhood which could boast of a resident, if not always regular, practitioner of the healing art, is beyond the limits of our knowledge or powers of divination.

The fact remains that the mostly bare, and always sparsely populated, stretch of Down country, extending from Wantage to Newbury, rich in British and Roman remains—roads, camps, and barrows—later on the scene of Alfred's conflict with the Danes, and later still of the Parliamentary Wars, has depended mainly for its medical treatment from early in the eighteenth century to the present time upon the successive Brightwalton "doctors."

In the history of William Savory, his ancestors and descendants, we have an example of the vicissitudes of families: we shall be able to imagine what sort of medical treatment was obtainable in our country villages in the middle of the eighteenth century, and we shall see how the son of a village wheelwright was able, by perseverance and application, to raise himself to the membership of the Surgeons' Company.

In the process we shall hear what he says of his doings as an apprentice, and, in especial, we shall read in his own words the interesting account of his short Hospital career.

It is seldom indeed that material is available for the exhibition of so complete a picture of the life of an obscure country practitioner in the eighteenth century.



COTTAGE AT BRIGHTWALTON, KNOWN AS "OLD GRAY'S."

William Savory's grandfather, a native of South Moreton, in the County of Berks, was the son of William and Joan Savory, of that village, and being left an orphan in early life apprenticed himself to a wheelwright, by name Gray, at Brightwalton. Upon the death or retirement of his master he commenced business on his own account, and about 1720 bought the house known as "Old Gray's," which remained the home of his family for five generations.* He was twice married, and by his first wife left two sons, William and John, while by his second marriage, which yielded no issue, he acquired, after his wife's death in 1768, a sum of £2,200. He died in 1786, in his ninetieth year.† His elder son, William, began life in his father's

* See illustration.

† William Savory, the subject of this memoir, relates that he remembered hearing his grandfather talk of going to London for the first time with a village companion, and of their seeing some potatoes in a market, which they thought were strange turnips. They brought some home with them, these being the first potatoes seen in Brightwalton. This would be about 1715.

workshop, and eventually succeeded to the business on his father's retirement. He appears to have been the first of his family to dabble in barbery and surgery, and had printed (*sic*) on his shop door the following:—

“Bleeding, Drawing of Teeth and Apothecaries Drugs Sold here.
 “Also Dr. James’ fever powders. Genuine Daffy’s Elixir.
 “Manna. Bateman’s and Stoughton’s Drops. Godfrey’s Cordial.
 “Liquid Shell (*sic*). Hooper’s Pills. Oils and Tinctures.
 “Anderson’s Scott (*sic*) pills, and Dr. Hitchcock’s Rochford Drops
 “and pills. Eaton’s Styptic. Fryar’s Balsam. Gums of all
 “sorts. Best double-distilled Lavender and Hungary Water.
 “Salts. Cordial Cephalic Snuff. Knives, Sissers (*sic*), Buckles,
 “Buttons.”

He also sold nails, locks, ironmongery and wooden ware, and among his other accomplishments he measured land and played the bass viol at church. He went to London frequently, and it was during his last visit that he contracted small-pox, of which, in spite of the attention of Dr. Collett, of Newbury*—the most famous local physician of his time—he died in 1772, aged 47. After his death, his widow continued to practise bleeding and dressing wounds, and to sell medicines as before, and his brother John succeeded to the business of wheelwright, with which he combined that of tooth-drawing.

This William Savory, the third of his name, left one son and three daughters, and this son it was who obtained the membership of the Surgeons’ Company. And this was no small accomplishment, for it must be remembered that in those early days (1780), and indeed up to the passing of the Apothecaries Act of 1815, there were in effect no regulations controlling the practice of medicine. No examination was necessary, and the bulk of country doctors was composed of men quite uneducated in the “mystery” of surgery—which, be it noted, is derived from the old French *mestier*, *métier*, a trade, not from the Latin *mysterium*, a secret)—except in respect of what knowledge they had been able to pick up as apprentices.

We are told that it was at first intended that he should be christened “Doctor,” *after his father*, but other counsels prevailed, and he was called William, which name for six generations of his family was borne by the eldest son.

*Dr. John Collett was born in London in 1708. His father was a merchant, and his uncle was for many years Governor of Fort St. George. He was educated at Greenwich, and thence went to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He afterwards studied physic at Leyden under the celebrated Boerhaave, and there he took his degree of M.D. in 1731. He also attended the medical schools of Paris and London, and in 1733 was admitted an Extra-Licentiate of the College of Physicians. He then settled at Newbury, where he practised for nearly half a century, and where he died in 1780.

In his infancy he was delicate, and was attended at various times by Dr. Sampson and Mr. Seymour, of Wantage, and by Dr. Collett, of Newbury. In 1772 he, with many others, was inoculated with small-pox at the village inn by Dr. Sampson, who received two guineas for each patient, "medicine included." They all had small-pox favourably.

It seems that William's father used to purchase most of his drugs from this Dr. Sampson, who is here described as being "a little man who used to wear three or four pair of stockings at a time." In spite of his endeavours to keep his feet warm he died in 1775, and in April, 1780, we find that the whole parish of Farnborough—a neighbouring village—was inoculated with small-pox by Mrs. Sampson, his widow, and Mr. Cooper, of Wantage.

In 1781, William Savory went to London for the first time, with his grandfather. They travelled by the Wantage Stage, passing through Wallingford, Nuffield, Nettlebed, Fairmile, Henley, Hurley Bottom, and Maidenhead, to Park Street, London, where his sister Sarah was then living in service with Lady Head.* He says: "We went to St. Paul's, The Tower, and Westminster Abbey."

On March 24th, 1783, when fourteen years of age, he went to live at Newbury with "Dr." David Jones, and on April 30th was apprenticed, as from the former date, for five years for the sum of £60. His principal duty at first appears to have been the distillation of various waters and oils, among others peppermint, horehound, sage, and fumitory, and even at this early age he occasionally drew teeth.

His spare time was occupied in learning Astrology, and once a week he went to "Dr." William Waters, who lived in Newbury, "in Mary-hill by the Star," to whom he gave sixpence for each lecture. This "Dr." Waters is here credited with being very well versed in Astrology and casting urine. He left Newbury early in 1786 for Reading, where he died shortly afterwards from the consequences of intemperance. William, in his diary, gives a list of several books which he purchased of him:—

" 'Gadbury's Doctrine of Nativities and horary Questions
"with Waters' improvements,' 8s.; 'Rhumsy' (? William
"Ramsey) on Astrology,' 2s. 6d.; 'Salmon's Soul of Astrology,'
"2s. 6d.; 'Coley's Key of Astrology,' 5s.; 'Wharton's
"Works,' 5s.; 'Salmon's Synopsis and Physical Dictionary,' 5s.;
" 'Ambrose Parey's Works,' 10s. 6d.; and "A book in his own
"handwriting, containing receipts for diseases, etc.'; total,
"£1 18s. 6d."

* This was Lady Head, of Langley Hall, Berks, the widow of Sir Francis Head, 4th Bart., daughter and heiress of Sir William Boys, M.D., an eminent physician of Canterbury, and great-granddaughter of Sir George Ent, M.D., the friend of Harvey.

The constant intermarriage of members of the families of Head and Boys is one of the curiosities of genealogy.

So that as early as his fifteenth year he showed no small desire for knowledge, and it surely must have been exceptional to find a lad of that age who would by choice expend so considerable a sum on books of this description. The subject continued to interest him, for his commonplace-book abounds in the genitures of various of his friends and relations, and among other items is a letter which he received from Mr. Ebenezer Sibley, Student in Astrology, etc., of 39, Castle Street, Bristol, which, after answering certain astrological questions, concludes: "Thus, Sir, as you are a lover of science, I have complied with your request, wishing you all the success possible to be desired from being a son of the divine Urania, and remain your friend, E. SIBLEY."

But, as may be gathered from the following note, he had other and more menial duties. He says:—"I had a misfortune about this time to break a pane of glass in the shop-window, owing to the highness of the wind, in putting up the shutters; but, it not being known to my Master or Mrs. the next day, I went out the next evening and did my business as quick as possible. I made great haste back, and, seeing a good opportunity, being a dark evening, I broke the glass again, and ran off, and came back again quite unconcerned, and so I got rid of censure from my Master or Mrs."

About this time he saw an opportunity of learning French, of which he availed himself. "Monsieur used to lodge with Mr. Attkins in Bartholomew Street: he came to me twice a week for one month, but Monsieur left Newbury without delivering the sentiments of his mind to anyone, I believe by reason of his debts." The wily Frenchman took with him an "entrance fee" of 10s. 6d., and had induced his pupil to purchase from him four French books, which cost William an additional sovereign.

In January, 1786, the shop and bottles were newly painted by one Powell, who, the diarist says, "taught me how to etch and engrave, but in return he *borrowed* my flute, an incision knife, and the four books of Cornelius Agrippa; so that's a reward for putting too great confidence in a stranger." He certainly was not fortunate in his choice of teachers.

In February of this year his grandfather died, and left him £100, and on May 8th occurs this remark:—"Mr. Moore, Druggist in London, sent me two lancets and case as a present."*

Business in connection with the probate of his grandfather's will took him to London with his uncle in October, and, travelling on the Newbury coach, his curiosity led him to number the public-houses they passed from Speenhamland to Hyde Park Corner. There were 222 in the 56 miles.

* This item suggests a relationship between the Brightwalton family and the old-established firm of Savory and Moore, but on enquiry no such connection is known to have existed.

On June 7th, 1787, he says:—"I had my hair tied for the first time," and "this summer we had the players in Newbury."

He begins his diary for 1788 with these words:—"I had now got to the twentieth year of my age, and near the expiration of my apprenticeship, which caused my spirits to be elevated on the thought of Liberty," which latter came to him on March 25th, when he returned to Brightwalton, to his uncle's house, and apparently commenced practice there at once on his own account.

His late master, "Dr." David Jones, of Newbury, was evidently fully as superstitious as we should expect even one of his nationality to be, and "many patients applied to him who supposed themselves to be under an ill-tongue, for which he used the means laid down for witchcraft; others to know the event of their future lives, how to find things lost, etc." Two of his magical prescriptions have been preserved:—

"To buy a spirit. Give the condemned person something for his spirit, and make an agreement that he do serve you at all times and upon all occasions. And it must be signed with three drops of his blood and three hairs of his head. This I was told by 'Dr.' Jones, who, I think, is superstitious enough to believe it."

Again.—"To appear invisible. Take a cat that is all over black, and put him instantly in a pot of boiling water. When it's cold, stand with your back to the pot looking in a glass, and pick out every bone separately one by one, looking at them in a glass. There is a certain bone when you take it out of the water you cannot see in the glass: then it's done. Keep that bone for your use. With this bone any person may appear invisible.—This is another of Dr. Jones' 'repartis' (*sic*), who, when he was in Wales, it was told him, and that it was experienced on board a ship."

He then gives a collection of amulets and charms learned from "Dr." Waters and others, among which occurs the magical word *Abracadabra* (the name of a god worshipped by the Tyrians), which was to be written on paper several times, one under the other, each time omitting a final letter, so that, when finished, the top and right side from below upwards each spelt out the name. This was to be rolled up and hung on a string round the patient's neck, "with a little Pulv. Creta in it," and was reputed to cure toothache or ague. The word *Kalendenta*, written in the same form on a piece of bread, the top line being cut off and at once given to the patient to eat, and so on, a line every day for nine days, the tenth and last piece being given to the dog (?), was a charm against the ague (? hydrophobia).

Again, for the ague (which, be it remembered, was a common disease in England in those days):—"Write on a piece of paper—a quarter of a sheet—in large letters,

S	A	T	O	R
A	R	E	B	O
T	E	N	E	T
O	B	E	R	A
R	O	T	A	S

“Rowl (*sic*) it up and hang it about the party’s neck, that it may lay between the breasts.”

Here is an amulet in verse for the falling evil:—

“Gaspar with his myrrh began these presents to unfold,
Then Melchior brought in frankincense, Balthasar brought in gold.
Now he that of these holy Kings,* these names about shall bear,
The Falling Ill by grace of Christ shall never need to fear.”

This is an incantation against the falling evil:—

“Take the sick person by the hand, and whisper in his ear these words softly:—‘I conjure thee by the Sun, Moon, and by the Gospel for the day delivered by God unto Hubert, Giles, Cornelius and John, that thou arise and fall no more.’”

Again:—“This is a true copy of the holy writing that was brought down from Heaven by an angel to St. Leo, Pope of Rome, and he did bid him take it to King Charles when he went to the battle (?). And the angel said that what man or woman beareth this writing about them with good devotion, and say every day three paternosters, three aves, and one creed, shall not on that day be overcome of his enemies. Neither shall he be robbed or slain of thieves, pestilence, thunder, lightning, neither be hurt by fire or water: neither shall have displeasure of Lords and Ladies. He shall not be condemned by false witnesses, nor be taken by the falling evil. If a woman be in travel (*sic*), by this writing upon her belly she shall have easy deliverance, the child right-shaped, and Christendom (?), and through virtue of the following words:—

“✕ Jesus ✕ Christ ✕ Messiah ✕ Soter ✕ Emmanuel
✕ Sabaoth ✕ Adonai ✕ Unigenitus ✕ Magister
✕ Paracletus ✕ Salvator noster ✕ Agios (Yschyrios ?)
✕ Agios ✕ Adonetos ✕ Gasper ✕ Melchior ✕ Balthasar
✕ Matthews ✕ Marcus ✕ Lucas ✕ Johannes.”†

Upon his return home his uncle invited all the farmers and tradesmen in Brightwalton to dinner, after which a half-pint bumper went round:—

“Here’s a health to he that is now set free,
That once was a ’prentice bound;
Now for his sake this holiday we’ll make,
So let his health go round.”

He lost no time in commencing practice, for in the beginning of April “the drawers and bottles were painted.” In the interval between her husband’s death and her son’s completion of his apprenticeship, his mother had continued to let blood, dress wounds, and sell

*These were the Three Kings of the East, patrons of Cologne.

†Somewhat similar to an old formula used “against the pest.”

medicines, while his uncle, who had succeeded to the business of wheelwright, joined thereto the profession of dentistry. But upon William's return these occupations were handed over to him. "My first patient," he says, "was Mills' boy, of Farnborough, whose metatarsal bones *was* very much *disformed*, so that he could not walk for six months: I cured him in seven weeks." His surgery was happily of a higher quality than his English.

From March 25th to September 28th he bled 62 people, and drew 17 teeth. And then on October 2nd he left home again, this time for London, and a verbatim account of his doings there follows:—

"1788, Oct. 3, I went to attend at St. Thomas' and Guy's Hospitals in London. I went on the Newbury Coach, and the next morning I went over the City, etc., and saw during the day most of my acquaintance—John Davenport, surgeons' instrument maker, and West, draper in 'White Chapple,' Crawley and Adcock, Bishopsgate Street, druggists, etc.

"The 5th I breakfasted with Mr. Hurlock, surgeon in St. Paul's Churchyard, and went with him to see his patients. Monday evening, Oct. 6, I went to Mr. Cline, in St. Mary Axe, who is first Surgeon and Lecturer on Anatomy at St. Thomas's Hospital. I paid him seven guineas for attending as a perpetual pupil to his lectures on anatomy and surgery, and five guineas for dissections. At eleven o'clock I went to St. Thomas's Hospital, and paid at the office for seeing the practice of both hospitals, viz.: St. Thomas's and Guy's, eighteen guineas for half a year. I also paid £1 2s. fees at the said office of St. Thomas's. The terms of the hospital are:—For attending lectures on Anatomy and Surgery as perpetual pupil, £7 7s.; for physic, 2 courses, £5 5s., for one course, £3 3s.; for two courses in midwifery, £5 5s.; a physician's pupil, six months, £22 1s.; a surgeon's pupil, six months, £18 18s.; ditto, for twelve months, £25 4s.; dresser for six months, £31 10s.; ditto for twelve months, £50.

"Mr. Cline's lecture this day was the fourth, and on the absorbent vessels. I paid 2s. 6d. for a ticket on my entrance into the theatre. The surgeons at St. Thomas's are Messrs. Cline, Chandler, and Birch; physicians at St. Thomas's are Drs. Fordyce, Crawford, and Blane. Surgeons at Guy's are Messrs. Warner, Lucas, and Cooper; physicians, Drs. Saunders, Skeete, and Harvey. Every surgeon has a physician particularly, as Mr. Chandler and Dr. Fordyce, Mr. Cline and Dr. Crawford, Mr. Birch and Dr. Blane, etc.

"There are eighteen wards in St. Thomas's Hospital, twelve men's wards and six women's wards, including three wards called 'foul' wards for patients with the venereal disease. The names of them are:—Abraham's, Isaac's, Jacob's, George's, Henry's, William's, Edward's, Cutting's, King's, Ann's, Mary's, Elizabeth's, Lydia's, Queen's, Dorcas'.

'Foul' wards are:—Job's, Naples, and Magdalen's. (He then proceeds with a list of the subjects of one course of Cline's lectures on Anatomy, comprising the whole structure of the body, and finishing with the seventy-first lecture "On the history of Anatomy.")*

"These lectures were read again (for) the second course which began in January. On April 22, 1789, began the lectures on Surgery, which is always immediately after the spring course. In all there were twenty-one lectures on Surgery, and after these Dr. Louder reads six or seven lectures on the gravid uterus at the theatre of St. Thomas's, and begins at half-past seven o'clock in the morning. The surgeon goes round the wards every day at eleven clock, every day by turns, Mr. Cline Mondays, Chandler Tuesdays, and Birch Wednesdays; Thursday is the day for taking in patients, which is by turns, and on Saturday all go round, both physicians and surgeons.† This Mr. Cline is an excellent surgeon, and is near-sighted. In the operation theatre at St. Thomas's is a very fine drawing of Chiselden, and are also these words:—

Theatrum hoc chirurgicum
de novo conformandum ac decorandum
sumptu suo curavit
Georgius Arnold, Armiger
senatus Londinensis et hujus
nosocomii præses meritissimo colendus
Anno Dom. MDCCLI
Miseratione non precatatione (?).

"There is also in the same theatre the figure of one Samuel Wood, a miller, whose arm, with the scapula, was torn off from his body by a rope winding round it, the other end being fastened to the cogs of the mill. This happened in 1737. The vessels being stretched it bled very little, the arteries and nerves were drawn out of his arm; he was cured by Mr. Ferri, surgeon at St. Thomas's, by superficial dressings, the natural skin being left almost sufficient to cover it.

"In the large theatre at St. Thomas's, where Cline's lectures are given, is a table in the middle, and seats round it one above another; opposite is a little room containing an immense number of anatomical preparations, which are shown every day at the time of lecture, relating to what the subject is upon, and on the other side of the staircase is the dissecting room.

* A hundred and twenty years have passed. There is no professional chair of medical history at any of our universities; it is included neither in the schedules of education nor examination—even as an optional subject—in any medical school, and there is no existing society which makes it a speciality!

† This account should be compared with that concerning Guy's Hospital written by Warner, and printed in Wilks' and Bettany's History of Guy's, pp. 88 *et seq.*

"Oct. 15, paid Dr. Louder five guineas to attend two courses of his lectures on midwifery. I went to his lecture every morning at half-past seven o'clock till nine. His theatre is at his own house in St. Saviour's churchyard, near St. Thomas's and Guy's Hospitals, and on the other side of St. Saviour's Church is his labour-house. Oct. 21, began dissecting, and 29th, came from my sister's* in 'White Chapple' to a lodging-house in Joiner Street at number thirty-two with one Mrs. Meakin. I paid 2s. per week. The reason of my coming from my sister's (being) it was so inconvenient in attending labours and accidents.

"The price for an adult subject is £2 2s.; foetus, 7s. 6d.; extremity, 7s. 6d.; head, 7s. 6d.; injecting a head, 3s.; injecting a placenta, 2s. The first week I was at the hospital my head was greatly affected by going in the 'foul' wards and dissecting room, but afterwards it did not hurt me.

"Oct. 9, two patients were brought in, one a fractured elbow, the other a wound on the scalp, but no fracture; also I saw this day two amputations. Oct. 11, I saw two operations performed at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, one was on a Spaniard by Mr. Pitt, who extracted a stone from the bladder (which) weighed six ounces: it was very ragged; the patient recovered. The other operation was an amputation of the thigh. Oct. 15, Mr. Cline performed the operation of castration: he was about fifteen minutes in doing it, and after taking out the diseased testicle, the lips of the wound were closed, and a sticking plaster applied. Oct. 16, was an operation by Mr. Birch. The patient was upwards of sixty years of age, and had an inguinal hernia: the intestines were very difficult to be reduced, and the patient next day died. Oct. 17, Mr. Birch performed two operations on the hydrocele, which was by incision two inches or more in length, and more than one pint of water discharged. The wound was not quite closed, but dry lint put between the edges. The other was a separation of the præputium. Oct. 24. Two operations: the one was an amputation of the leg by Mr. Chandler, and the extract of a cataract by Mr. Cline. Nov. 1. I saw an operation performed at Bartholomew's which was on a schirrous breast, and it weighed upwards of a pound weight, and afterwards a soft plaster was applied. Nov. 19 was a man tapped for the ascites by Birch, and I suppose four gallons were evacuated. There were during the time I was there several operations for the hare-lip, stone, fistulas, trepanning, etc., two or three times a week. One of the nurses in the Hospital died before any assistance could be got soon enough, from an obstruction of the air tube, as she was eating beef, she fell down, and immediately expired.

* This was his sister Sarah, who had left Lady Head's service, and had married Francis Fordham, the landlord of the "Flying Horse" Inn, Lambeth Street, Goodman's Fields, London.

On opening the air tube it was found obstructed by a bit of beef. There were likewise during my attendance at the Hospital three or four patients with the lock-jaw, and all died. Mr. Caw, late surgeon at St. Thomas's, extracted a stone (which) weighed thirteen ounces from the bladder of a man, and in the form (?) of the bladder. Mr. Sharp, late surgeon of Guy's Hospital, extracted a great number of small calculi from a patient. He gave him soap lees ($q^t \bar{x}$ in Aq. pura). The patient grew weaker and weaker till he died. Mr. Sharp examined the urinary bladder, and found a vast number of calculi; with what came away before his death (there were) 214. I saw them in St. Thomas's theatre. They were of a whitish colour, some as large as a hazel-nut, some smaller. Calculi may be known from pebble or stone by making a section, when we may see the different laminæ in the calculi. (See Cline's Anatomy, p. 167.)

"There was a lad about 14 years old (who) had his leg amputated by Mr. Burch, when he astonished us all by being so cheerful during the time of the operation, and did not express pain any time till tying the blood-vessels, and then but little.

"The most frequent operations performed were amputations and hernias.

"I wrote from Mr. Cline during two courses of his lectures, which may be seen in two volumes (entitled), 'Cline's Anatomy.'*

"When a bubo is opened they apply dry lint, and upon it a plaster, but never use tents

"Mr. Cline divided a nerve in a dog's leg, and in about six weeks after the dog was killed, and the nerve was found united again, so that union takes place in a tendon if cut and separated at some distance. A young woman was brought to the hospital burnt all over as black as a coal: she died in a few days after.
 One patient, of 18 years of age (had) a cancerated uterus: her cries and pain were very great. I saw an operation at Bartholomew's on the hydrocele tapped with a trocar, and an injection thrown in for a few minutes, also a woman with the fistula lachrymalis.

"I shall next give a general description of the Hospitals, and first of St. Thomas', which hath four squares. The first, next the Borough, was built by Guy, and contains the women's wards; the second square is offices and rooms for the stewards, butler, cooks, the minister's residence, and chapel. The other squares have wards for the men. At the lower side of the third square is the surgery, kept by one Lucas; on the south side is the apothecary's shop, etc.

"Guy's Hospital has two very large squares. This Hospital was built by Guy, and has much better wards than what is at St. Thomas'.

* The first volume has been preserved, and has been offered by the present writer to the Library of St. Thomas' Hospital.

The first square on the west side is the chapel, etc.; the other square has wards all round. The apothecary was Mr. Babington. It has an excellent theatre, and is (full) when Dr. Sanders gives his lectures on physic, chemistry, etc.

“Bartholomew’s Hospital is one large square; it is on the east side of Smithfield.

“The London Hospital is very large and spacious, but several wards are empty. This Hospital is supported by voluntary contributions, but it is very poor at present owing to the Quakers, who used to contribute very largely. But the reason they don’t now so much was some time ago there was a surgeon’s (?) place vacated, and a gentleman of their sect was a candidate, but was not admitted by reason of fewer votes, by which the ‘Aminadabs’ were offended.*

“I bought of Davenport a case of dissecting instruments, cost 19s., containing six knives, nippers, hook, and blowpipe. Mr. Heighton was master of the dissecting.

“I shall next leave the hospital and Cline, and return to Dr. Louder, man-midwife, in St. Saviour’s Churchyard. Dr. Louder begins his lectures on the bones of the pelvis, and then a description of the female organs of generation, and the difficulties and diseases in general. Next, signs to distinguish pregnancy and diseases of pregnant women, and then on labours, natural, lingering, and laborious, and præternatural. And how to manage before and after delivery, how to use the instruments, etc. Of twins, miscarriages, diseases of the mother and child, etc. The Doctor will not take a pupil for one course only, except he has attended somewhere else before. Two or three times a week (there were) labours at the lying-in house: we were all called, and used to take them by turn.

“The first labour I attended was at Redriff, a natural labour. (I) gave the woman 2s. 6d. Jan 29. I experienced the use of the catheter on old Dame Penny. (I) gave her 1s. Feb. 2. I was at a labour nine hours; it was a young woman, and her first labour. They were Irish people, and I delivered her kneeling, which is their country way.† They told me ’twas always customary with them to give the child rue or black-cherry water, and not to give them the breast till 3 or 4 days after they are born. So much for labours.

* This refers to the case of John Whitehead, M.D., Leyden, who, at first a Wesleyan, afterwards became a member of the Society of Friends, and by their influence successfully contested the vacant post of Physician – not Surgeon – to the London Hospital in 1784. The election was afterwards declared invalid, and he then seceded from the Quakers and rejoined Wesley, whom he attended in his last illness. He was more famous as a preacher than as a physician.

(What was the origin of the nickname “Aminadabs” for the Quakers?)

† When did the dorsal position become customary in Ireland?

"The Doctor had a figure in the form of a woman, and a little leathern child, to experience difficult labours and præternatural cases. About the time he was lecturing on using the instruments, we had two cases each, a natural presentation, and a face presentation. When he was treating on præternatural cases we had two cases, a breech presentation and a back presentation; also when he was lecturing on searching, there were eight or nine women at the lying-in house to be examined by us.

"Feb. 20. I got my certificate for midwifery, and gave Mrs. Gibson 5s., and the nurse 2s. 6d. I often used to frequent the labour-house. I bought of Mrs. Gibson a placenta to inject (and) gave her 1s.

"I wrote out the pharmacopeia of St. Thomas's, also a book I wrote out of clinical cases at Guy's Hospital. I wrote Dr. Louder's lectures during two courses (which see 'Louder's Midwifery'). After Cline's first course of lectures was ended, I came in the country. I carried down with me two hearts injected, two arms, . . . and fœtal skeleton. I went to Moreton, stayed all night, and came home to Brightwaltham the next day, Feb. 25. After I had finished midwifery I left my lodgings in Joiner Street, and went again to my sister's. I bought the medical pocket book, had it bound and interleaved. I did not give any money for my certificate: (I) gave Lucas, the surgeryman, 2s. 6d.

"I wrote out the lectures on chemistry by Drs. Saunders and Wm. Babington (which see book entitled 'Chemistry'). Bought of Davenport midwifery instruments, etc.:—Forceps 15s., blunt hook 1s. 9d., woman's catheter 5s. 6d., man's ditto 5s., forceps 2s., caustic case 1s., abscess lancet 2s. 6d., three crooked needles 1s. 3d., two trusses 24s., pouch (?) 10s. 6d.

"1789, Feb. 6. Gave Dr. Saunders three guineas for attending one course of his lectures. I wrote after him (which see Saunders on Physic *), and at the end of the spring course was given two lectures on Electricity, and how far it should be used in diseases. He is an excellent lecturer, and fine orator.

"My sister and self tried our luck in the lottery, but proved all blank. Khuns (?), who kept 'The Flying Horse' before my sister, had half the £30,000 prize in the lottery, viz., £15,000; amongst some poor German sugar bakers about £700 each.

"One morning in February I went to see seven men and one woman hanged opposite the door at Newgate. The woman received her reward in this life opposite the seven men, and was afterwards burnt. Easter

* This volume has been preserved, and has been offered by the present writer to the Library of St. Thomas's Hospital.

Monday I went with three or four of my acquaintances to Greenwich Fair. There is a very fine hospital (which) is at the edge of the water-side.

"I bought 'Smellie's Midwifery,' 3 books (for) 18s., in the Strand. The electrifying machine I bought of Simson, a bookbinder, in Lombard Street: it cost 12s.

"I used to go to the Medical Society at Guy's and to the Medical Society in Bolt Court, Fleet Street.† After the King's recovery the principal streets in London were illuminated two nights. The Bank, Royal Exchange, Sun Fire Office, India House, etc., were very elegantly illuminated. On the India House were large letters (formed) of lamps, "May the King live for ever," and over it a beautiful star set with different coloured lamps. We travelled all night to see the fireworks. We were seven hours going on a coach from Aldgate Church to the Royal Exchange on account of so many coaches.

"When the King was very ill, report spread about one morning that he was dead, and almost all the black cloth was bought, even old black cloths at Rag Fair.

"I displaced three large teeth for Joseph Cullum at Stratford. Went to Guildhall to see the drawing of the lottery tickets. There are two wheels, one on each side of Guildhall, one containing the tickets, the other blanks and prizes. The Blue-coated boys change every hour; they have an arm tied behind them.

"I went to a burying at 'White Chappel' Church, but the Curate read none of the service in the Church, nor was the corpse carried into the Church, but the customary prayers said at the grave. They will not admit the corpse to be carried into Church to read the lessons, etc., without paying 17s.

"I inoculated John Savory Fordham* with the small-pox, and put some ear-rings in Khun's child's ears whilst I was in London. I also went to a Romish meeting in Holborn. Just agoing in is a pillar of wood and a basin of water fixed up on one side of this pillar. Every Catholic (who) enters dips his finger in the basin of water and crosses his face. I recollect hearing of a story that some person blackened the water, and every person had a black cross upon his face. I went also to a Jew's synagogue. There were seven priests, and all the people had branches of trees in their hands, and they beat them so much that at last all the leaves were off them. It was on the account of Joshua's taking Jericho (see Joshua, chap. 6): they went seven times round the meeting, and the ram's horn was blown each time in going round.

† This was the Medical Society of London.

* His sister's child.

" During my time in London I was never at leisure, for at half-past seven o'clock in the morning I went to Dr. Louder's lectures and stayed till 9. Then to breakfast, at ten to Dr. Sander's lectures till eleven o'clock, then to the hospital till Cline's lecture, which was from one o'clock to three. By this time I used to get a good appetite (for) my dinner. The remainder of my time was taken up in writing lectures, clinical cases, attending labours and accidents, dissecting, etc.

" 1789, May 7. I was examined at Surgeons' Hall, and had the honour conferred on me to be a member of their body. This Hall is a large pile of buildings in the Old Bailey Street. We were called in the room and examined one at a time. About a fortnight before I was examined I went to the Hall, and entered my name in a book and paid 2s. 6d. When I entered the room I was a little timid by seeing the surgeons; however, I recovered of that dread, and answered every question they asked me. The table they sit round is in the form of a semi-circle; the Master sits in the middle, and the two wardens (one) each side, and three or four surgeons each side of the wardens, and the surgeons examine the pupils by turns. The Master asked me where I received my instructions. I told him—at St. Thomas's Hospital, and attended lectures under Mr. Cline. I was then ordered to Pile to be examined:—(*Q*=question; *A*=answer.)

Q.—What are the common integuments?

A.—The cutis, cuticle, and rate mucosum.

Q.—What are the arteries?

A.—Vessels which carry the blood from the heart.

Q.—What comes first to view after the common integuments are off the abdomen?

A.—The linea alba.

Q.—How does the urine enter the bladder?

A.—By the ureters obliquely.

Q.—What are the parts in the thorax?

A.—The heart, lungs, pluræ, etc.

" ' Now I have asked you a few questions in anatomy, I shall ask you a few in surgery.'

Q.—Where would you cut off a person's leg?

A.—If below the knee I would amputate about 4 or 5 inches below the extremity of the patella.

Q.—But where would you make your first incision?

A.—A little below to allow for the excess of contraction.

Q.—Where would you apply the tourniquet, and how would you stop the hæmorrhage after the limb is amputated?

A.—I would apply the tourniquet on the middle of the thigh, because there the artery is nearer the bone, and I would stop the blood with a needle and ligature, and after that I would keep the skin forward with a bandage, and apply dry lint and adhesive plaster.

Q.—Which side would you stand on to amputate the leg?

A.—On the inside, because of taking off the fibula first.

Q.—Supposing your patient is weak and low after the operation, what would you give him?

A.—I would give him bark.

Q.—Suppose you have a stone in the urethra, how would you extract it?

A.—If it was impossible for me to get it out without making an incision, I would pull the prepuce over the glans, and make an incision the length of the stone through the teguments.*

“It cost me £13 5s.; the diploma cost the 5s. We were all called in afterwards and took our oaths, and received a little pamphlet, containing rules and orders. The next day we received our diplomas.

“May 20. My brother-in-law, P. Norris, came to London, and I should have gone back with him had not I, the day before he left London, been attacked with the measles. I was in bed a week, and two or three days after I left London, and came home to Brightwaltham. I sent my anatomical preparations and drugs by Clark’s waggon, viz:—A skeleton of a girl about 8 years old, (an) anatomy of a boy about two years, an arm well injected and dissected of a young woman, a foetal anatomy, showing the circulation of the blood from the mother to the child, a placenta, etc. I came from London to Brightwaltham June 3rd, 1789, the lectures being all ended. It cost me in all upwards of £100.”

Upon his return to his native village he immediately started in practice, and his diary contains records of his treatment. During the year 1790 he bled 126 persons, drew 29 teeth, divided the frenum linguae of three children, and “had many remarkable cases—fractured clavicle, witchcraft, scald heads, etc.”

In March, 1791, he came to an agreement for the purchase of a house in Bartholomew Street, Newbury, for the sum of £252, and he paid one guinea down, and gave orders for its repair and decoration. The next month John Jarvis was bound apprentice to him for the sum of £50, for five years, and at Easter he agreed with the neighbouring parishes of Farnborough and Leckhampstead to attend the poor by the year: Farnborough for £2 12s. 6d., small-pox, fractures, and midwifery excluded; and Leckhampstead for £5 5s. It appears that the list of those whom he had to attend at Farnborough comprised

* The coffers of the Company of Surgeons were in this year at a very low ebb, and it is scarcely to have been expected, under the circumstances, that the fees of candidates for the membership should have been refused. This may account for the ridiculous simplicity of the questions as a test of knowledge. Well might Savory say that he answered every question they asked him!

twenty-eight families, and at Leckhampstead forty-four families. The agreement is worth recording:—

“April 26, 1791. We, the Chapelwardens, Overseer, and chief inhabitants of the parish of Leckhampstead, in the County of Berks, now assembled upon parish business, do by these presents jointly and severally grant unto Wm. Savory, Surgeon and Apothecary, of Newbury, in the same County, the sum of five pounds five shillings to be paid unto the said Wm. Savory yearly during the term of ten years for attending the poor of the parish of Leckhampstead aforesaid, in all diseases respecting Surgery, Pharmacy and Midwifery, Fractures, and Small-Pox included. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands the day and year above written.

“WM. ADNAMS, Chapelwarden.

“JESSE WINKWORTH, Overseer.

“JOSH. ADNAMS, WM. BEW, JOSH. CHAMBERLAIN, JOSH. SHUFF, TIMY. BEW.”

In May of this year he records a case of fractured skull and sternum, upon which he met in consultation two Pusey* practitioners, Mr. Within and Mr. Stevens. Later in the month he went to London by coach and ordered a stock of drugs of Crawly & Adcock, in Bishopsgate Street; surgical instruments of Davenport, in “White Chapple”; and oils, etc., of Clarke, in Red Lion Street, “White Chapple.” He returned a few days later from London on the Bristol Mail, setting off from Piccadilly at nine in the evening and reaching Thatcham (near Newbury) at three the next morning.

On July 21st, being market day, he “opened shop” at his house in Newbury, and on the 30th he went to Reading to the printing office and gave Cowslade the following address, paying him for three insertions in the paper 16s. 6d. as follows:—

“William Savory, Surgeon, Apothecary, and Man-Midwife, in Bartholomew Street, Newbury,

“Begs leave to inform his friends and the public that he has attended the practice of St. Thomas’s and Guy’s Hospitals, London, and studied the several branches of Medicine, Surgery, Anatomy, and Midwifery under the most able professors, an advantage which greatly facilitated his arrival to that honour conferred on him by the Corporation of Surgeons in London in constituting him a member of their body.

“Wm. Savory returns his sincere thanks to his friends and the public for their past favours conferred on him when residing at Brightwalton, and assures them that no care nor attention shall be wanting on his part to render his endeavours satisfactory.”

Meanwhile he was making preparations for his forthcoming marriage. On September 3rd he bought a licence which cost him £1 12s. 6d., and a ring which cost 9s., and on the 8th of that month he writes: “I this day entered the altar of Hymen, but as I entered into a new life I shall for such a memorandum enter into a new book,” etc.

* Probably Pewsey in Wilts.

Unfortunately the latter is not forthcoming, and William Savory's after history has to be extracted from other sources. How long he remained at Newbury is doubtful—he had certainly left that town before 1817—but there are reasons for supposing that he returned to Brightwalton upon the death of his uncle in 1806, his mother having died four years earlier, and that he continued there in practice till his death in 1824, at the age of fifty-six.

He left a widow and one son, born in 1793, who, though he does not appear to have “walked” the hospitals or taken any diploma, succeeded his father probably by virtue of having been in practice before 1815. His name appears in the “Medical Directory” for 1848, but no qualification is credited to him, and it is noted that he had failed to reply to the editor's enquiries. He died, according to village tradition, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and was buried with his ancestors at Brightwalton.

A talk with some of the older inhabitants will still conjure up memories of “old Dr. Savory,” of his window bottles, of his bunches of herbs, bought in most instances from the Romany folk who, skilled in simples, still frequent the Down country.

The old man made money and invested it in land. He bought two or three farms in the parish and built the house, at a cost, it is said, of £1,400, in which the present writer resides. At his death he left an only son, William, who, eschewing the medical profession, commenced farming his own acres, having, by the irony of fate, married the daughter of the then village wheelwright. But lack of application and industry, coupled with extravagant habits, ended in the mortgage and eventual sale of his patrimony, and his only daughter married a small farmer in the neighbourhood, whom in turn the exigencies of the times have reduced to the position of an ordinary agricultural labourer weighed down by the burden of a large family.

In 1854, the year in which William Savory, the last medical man of the family, died, a surgeon named Duncan, by tradition “a ship's doctor,” commenced practice at Brightwalton. Before 1860 he had left the neighbourhood, and in that year he was succeeded by William James Wood, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., who, after thirty years residence in the village, died and was buried there in 1890. Since then the practice has been in the hands of the present writer, who, in thus recording the medical history of a small country village, ventures to suggest that others of his professional brethren should, with such material as is at their disposal, go and do likewise.

[The commonplace-book from which many of the above extracts have been taken is now in the possession of the Rev. H. F. Howard, Rector of Brightwalton, who has kindly placed it at the disposal of the present writer.]